

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-identified application is respectfully solicited on behalf of the Applicants.

The claims now pending stand rejected as follows:

- Claims 1, 3, 8, 12, 13, 16 and 21 under 35 U.S.C § 102(e) as being anticipated by Maxwell *et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 6,572,762).
- Claims 1, 3, 8, 12, 13, 16 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maxwell in view of Pedone (U.S. Patent No. 3,913,513).
- Claims 2, 4-7 and 17-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maxwell in view of Mazone (U.S. Patent No. 6,712,976).
- Claims 2, 4-7 and 17-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maxwell and Pedone, and further in view of Mazone.
- Claims 4-7, 10, 11, 17-20, 23 and 24 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maxwell in view of Hanrahan (U.S. Patent No. 5,767,060).
- Claims 4-7, 10, 11, 17-20, 23 and 24 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maxwell and Pedone, and further in view of Hanrahan.
- Claims 25 and 26 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maxwell and Pedone, and further in view of Ruger *et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 5,122,270).

As to the rejection under 102(e), the claim as previously amended recites a filter element having adjoining first and a second stages. In contrast, the Maxwell reference shows two separate elements or "cartridges" (52) and (54), each having its own filter element (56).

Moreover, the claim as previously amended recites that the first stage is formed of a first medium comprising a consolidated, permeable mass, and that the second stage is formed of a second medium comprising a fill. The Maxwell reference does not appear to disclose any such combination of media.

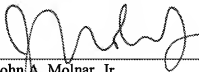
Accordingly, it is submitted that the claims should be considered novel over Maxwell.

The remaining rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) are based on Maxwell taken in various combinations with Pedone, Mazone, Hanrahan, and Ruger. However, upon a review of those references, none appears to disclose a filter element having the claimed combination of adjoining media, one of which is a consolidated, permeable mass, and the other of which is a fill. On this

basis, it is believed that the claims as previously amended should be considered to distinguish over the art made of record.

In view of the foregoing remarks, wherein the claim program is believed to define the claimed invention as being patentable over art made of record, the issuance of a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

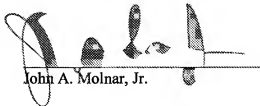
Respectfully submitted,



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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being transmitted to the United States Patent and Trademark Office by EFS on July 18, 2007.



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